

Strength in Numbers, Challenges in Diversity

LEGISLATIVE TRENDS AND POWER SHARING AMONG HISPANIC AMERICANS IN CONGRESS, 1977–2012

When Congress debated new immigration legislation in 2006, Senator Mel Martinez of Florida was much in demand. If he was not speaking before an audience, Martinez was cornering his colleagues in the Capitol or talking to congressional staffers who were concerned about how the bill would affect them. “Hearing it from the guy behind the counter, they know the names of the bills, it’s what everyone is talking about in the Hispanic community,” he told a Miami reporter.¹

The first Cuban American to serve in the U.S. Senate, Martinez immigrated to the United States in the 1960s. Part of a generation of Hispanic Americans that changed U.S. society and Congress’s legislative focus, Martinez and many of his Hispanic colleagues during this period were immigrants or the children of immigrants, and their congressional ambitions were shaped by their stories and their families’ stories. Martinez’s policy preferences were informed by his childhood and by the experiences and observations of other Hispanic Members.²

Since their constituents frequently struggled with English and with discrimination, these issues became central to Hispanic Members’ agendas. Other issues included the United States’ relationship with Cuba and the federal government’s relationship with its territories. But perhaps the most important topic of debate during the latter part of the 20th century was immigration. “There are those in the country who feel the country is ‘full,’” Martinez observed in 2006. “Had that been the prevailing view in the 1960s, I would not be here.”³

The Hispanic Americans who entered Congress between 1977 and 2012 represent the greatest increase in their ethnic group in congressional history.

At the 1981 Solidarity March in Washington, D.C., a migrant farm worker holds a sign in Spanish that reads, in part, “Do not snuff out the dreams of Hispanics!” Immigration reform remained a central, often controversial, national issue.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Of the 91 Hispanic Americans who served in Congress through August 2012, 37 were elected or appointed between 1822 and 1976, meaning that nearly 60 percent of the Hispanic Americans in congressional history (54 individuals) were elected in 1976 or later.

This increase was prompted by demographic changes and political reforms. Between the 1980 Census and 2010 Census, the number of Latinos in the United States nearly tripled, to 16 percent of the total population, making Hispanics the second largest ethnic group in the country.⁴ Hispanic representation in Congress has also increased because of two major reforms to America's electoral system: the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its extensions, and a series of Supreme Court decisions on redistricting that began in 1962.⁵

Hispanics' substantial presence in U.S. society did not translate immediately into a degree of comparative congressional representation.⁶ Hispanic-American representation in Congress did not change proportionally from 1977 to 2012, despite the burgeoning ratio of Latinos in the U.S. population. In 1981 there were nine Hispanic Americans in Congress while Latinos constituted slightly more than 6 percent of the U.S. population. Thus, there was one Hispanic American in Congress for every 1.62 million Hispanics. Thirty years later that ratio remained unchanged—there were 31 Hispanic Americans in Congress, while Hispanic Americans made up 16 percent of the U.S. population.⁷

Nevertheless, Hispanics' rapid population growth has transformed their profile in a number of states. For most of the 19th century and early 20th century, Latinos were from the Southwest. But recent census data indicate that Hispanic Americans are settling in all the major urban areas in the country.⁸ After reapportionment based on the 2010 Census, eight states gained House seats. The proportion of Hispanics in these growing states ranged from 37.6 percent (Texas) to 5.1 percent (South Carolina), with Hispanic growth rates

Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus meet, circa 1980s. From left to right: Solomon Ortiz of Texas; Robert Garcia of New York; Bill Richardson of New Mexico (standing); Albert Bustamante of Texas; Esteban Torres of California; and Matthew Martínez of California.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



ranging from 147.9 percent (South Carolina) to 41.8 percent (Texas). The 2010 Census also identified 10 states that lost House seats.⁹ In these states, the Hispanic population ranges from 17.7 percent (New Jersey) to 3.1 percent (Ohio) with growth rates ranging from 83.7 percent (Iowa) to 19.2 percent (New York). In each one of these states, whether its population is growing or declining, the growth rate for Hispanics outstrips the growth rate for the general population, increasing the proportion of Hispanics in the total U.S. population.¹⁰ This demographic trend has attracted the attention of both major political parties, which seek to win the loyalty of Hispanic voters.

As their numbers grew, particularly in the U.S. House of Representatives, Hispanic Americans in Congress were better positioned to influence the legislative process, both as individuals and as a bloc.¹¹ After the 1976 elections, for instance, five Members established the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, a legislative service organization that followed and influenced policy affecting America's Hispanic community. Unlike in other congressional caucuses, however, the diversity of the Hispanic Caucus limited its effectiveness. The caucus was open to both Republicans and Democrats, and its roster included Members from across the country. Competing regional interests often made the caucus an information clearinghouse and a communications network more than a vehicle for moving legislation through Congress.¹²

Hispanic Members during this period benefited from the privileges that were won by their predecessors. In congressional committees, these Members gained enough seniority to chair 11 committees and 16 subcommittees. A handful of Hispanic Members won spots in the leadership, where they helped make committee assignments, and track votes. Experience and exposure at many levels of American politics has made recent Hispanic-American Members attractive candidates for Cabinet-level posts and leadership positions at federal agencies. Senator Martinez's work as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the George W. Bush administration prior to his Senate service and his role as head of the Republican National Committee during his Senate tenure, exemplified Latinos' increasing participation in American politics by the early 21st century.

BACKGROUND AND PRE-CONGRESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

From Congress's origins, its Members have tended to be better educated and wealthier than other Americans.¹³ This pattern is evident in the Hispanic Americans elected to Congress after 1976.¹⁴

The occupations of this generation of Hispanic Members are heavily skewed toward the legal profession. Nearly 40 percent of this group, including all seven Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners who served during this era, practiced law or had studied law. This is consistent with the general characteristics of recent Congresses, in which law has been among the most frequently reported occupations. The 15 percent of Hispanic Members who worked in education, however, is twice as high as the percentage in Congress generally, and while the number of those engaged in business or banking pursuits hovered around 20 percent of the membership in recent Congresses, only 6 percent of Hispanics reported having such an occupation.¹⁵



Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Mel Martinez addresses the League of United Latin American Citizens convention in Orlando, Florida. In 2004, Martinez won election to the U.S. Senate as the first Cuban American to serve in that body.

Image courtesy of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



Ken Salazar of Colorado served in the U.S. Senate from 2005 to 2009. Salazar resigned his Senate seat in 2009 to become Secretary of the Interior in President Barack Obama's Cabinet.

Image courtesy of the U.S. Department of the Interior

Consistent with earlier congressional trends, Hispanic Members arrived in Washington with more political experience than did previous generations. Half this group cited service in state or territorial legislatures before their arrival on Capitol Hill—the same percentage for all Members of Congress found in surveys conducted since 1987.¹⁶ Seventy-one percent of Hispanic Members had prior political or public service, and many of these Members held prestigious positions before they arrived in Congress or after they left. Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero-Barceló served as governor of Puerto Rico before coming to Capitol Hill, and Aníbal Acevedo-Vilá and Luis G. Fortuño served as governors of Puerto Rico after their tenure in Washington. Two Hispanic Members of Congress were appointed to serve in President Barack Obama's Cabinet starting in 2009: Senator Ken Salazar of Colorado, as Secretary of the Interior, and Representative Hilda Solis of California, as Secretary of Labor.

Hispanic Members' experience meant they were slightly older than their colleagues. Notably, this development occurred at a time when Congress was aging. Contemporary Hispanic Members (1977–2012) were, on average, 56.41 years old when they arrived in Washington. The Congressional Research Service reports that the average age of all Members increased from 48.9 in 1981 to 56.65 in 2011.¹⁷

Family Connections, Gender, and Ethnic Roots

As in previous generations of Hispanic Members, politics in this generation was a family business. Three sets of siblings—the most common familial connection—served together during this period.¹⁸ Representative Loretta Sanchez won election to a Southern California district in 1996. Her younger sister, Linda Sánchez, won a seat from a nearby district in 2002, making them the first pair of sisters to serve in Congress.¹⁹ Brothers Mario and Lincoln Diaz-Balart served neighboring districts in South Florida between Mario's election in 2002 and Lincoln's departure from Congress in 2011. Colorado Senator Ken Salazar and Representative John Salazar were simultaneously elected to their respective chambers in 2004 and the brothers eventually shared a two-bedroom Washington apartment upon their election. Entering his congressional race four months after Ken announced his campaign for the Senate, older brother John joked, "He wore my hand-me-downs. I guess I can wear his."²⁰ Representative Edward Roybal of California and his daughter, Lucille Roybal-Allard, also of California, became the first Hispanic father-daughter pair to serve in Congress after she won election to represent part of his old district in 1992.

Increasing Diversity of Hispanic Members

The contemporary period also illustrates the geographical and gender diversity that began to characterize Hispanic Members of Congress. The expansion of territorial representation added Hispanics from the Virgin Islands with Territorial Delegate Ron de Lugo's election in 1972, followed by Ben Blaz and Robert Underwood from Guam and Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan from the Northern Mariana Islands. Another example of this growing heterogeneity was Tony Coelho of California. Not long after his election in 1978, Coelho, who was of Portuguese descent, had been denied membership by the Hispanic

Caucus reportedly because he was not considered Hispanic. But in 1985, he campaigned again and won admission to the caucus with the help of members such as Representative Bill Richardson of New Mexico.

The social changes of the 1970s opened the door for women Members. Up to this point all Hispanic Americans in Congress had been male and tended to be of Mexican or Puerto Rican ancestry. The election of Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who succeeded Claude Pepper of Florida in 1989, marked two milestones: Ros-Lehtinen, who had been born in Cuba and had served in the Florida legislature for much of the 1980s, became the first Hispanic woman to serve in Congress, and the first Cuban American in Congress. Another seven women and seven Cuban Americans would follow her through 2012. Robert Menendez of New Jersey became the first Cuban American who was elected to Congress from outside the state of Florida when he entered the House in 1993. In 2006 he was appointed to the Senate, where he joined Cuban-American Senator Mel Martinez.

CRAFTING AN IDENTITY

The educational, occupational, and political backgrounds of Hispanic Members resembled those of their congressional colleagues. Modern Hispanic Members benefited from the efforts of their female and African-American predecessors, who had arrived in Congress in greater numbers, pioneered strategies to influence legislation, and developed means to juggle their political interests with those of their geographic and ethnic constituencies.²¹

Representatives and Senators

Modern Hispanic-American Members have profited from the rights their predecessors won in Congress; long-serving Members such as Texans Henry González and Kika de la Garza, for example, rose to chair the powerful Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and Agriculture Committees, respectively.

Like other groups of congressional minorities, this generation of Latino Members faced a choice: to concentrate on their own legislative agendas without overtly embracing Hispanic issues, or to adopt Hispanic causes as their own and serve as surrogate representatives for Hispanics living in other districts or states.²² Members like Bill Richardson of New Mexico, Robert Garcia of New York, and Albert Bustamante of Texas embraced these multiple roles. But surrogate representatives did not always represent national interests; often they championed issues that were unique to their districts. Other Members, such as Matthew Martínez of California, Henry Bonilla of Texas, and Ken Salazar, insisted they were not just “Hispanic politicians.”

Drawn by cultural ties, and responding to the wishes of New York City’s large Puerto Rican constituency, Representative Robert Garcia, who was of Puerto Rican descent—as was his predecessor Herman Badillo—helped nonvoting Resident Commissioners such as Jaime Fuster with Puerto Rico’s legislative agenda. Like their predecessors, the Resident Commissioners in this generation considered themselves to be ambassadors for Puerto Rico as well as active legislators. In addition to submitting legislation, they wrote editorials and spoke about Puerto Rico to a broad range of audiences.



In 1985, Tony Coelho of California became the first person of Portuguese descent to join the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. He went on to become the Democratic Majority Whip, the highest elected House leadership position ever attained by a Hispanic American.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



Robert Garcia of New York served seven terms in the U.S. House, representing a Bronx-centered district. Like his predecessor, Herman Badillo, Garcia was of Puerto Rican heritage.

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Jaime Fuster served as Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner from 1985 to 1992 before resigning to become an associate justice on the insular supreme court.

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Statutory Representatives

A major development after 1977 was the addition to the House of new Territorial Delegates. Many were of Hispanic descent. In addition to the Resident Commissioner, who represented Puerto Rico, Territorial Delegates of Hispanic descent represented the Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The increased numbers of Territorial Delegates allowed them to work together and pursue greater political and economic autonomy for their respective territories. In the fall of 1981, they formed the Congressional Territorial Caucus in response to threats to cut territorial budgets.²³ Since they lacked a vote on the floor, Delegates and Resident Commissioners frequently testified before both House and Senate committees and subcommittees, hoping to influence legislation that was relevant to the territories. Delegates and Resident Commissioners concentrated on local issues much more often than their Hispanic colleagues who had a full vote.²⁴ Their distance from many national issues meant their experiences on Capitol Hill differed greatly from those of their voting colleagues. The job was humbling and often isolating, and almost all of them expressed the same frustrations. "When lobbyists learn that you don't have a vote, they don't talk to you. Maybe it's a blessing. I don't get harassed," Ben Blaz quipped in a 1986 *New York Times* feature on statutory representatives. Ron de Lugo said, "I can't afford to have a big ego." Resident Commissioner Jaime Fuster admitted, "There is a loneliness to this job," echoing the sentiments voiced by his predecessor Luis Muñoz Rivera decades earlier.²⁵ In 1993, when new House Rules gave statutory representatives the right to vote in the Committee of the Whole provided their vote did not determine the outcome of any particular measure, Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero-Barceló noted that the new right was "not really a vote, just an opportunity to participate."²⁶ But their participation was short-lived. The new Republican majority repealed the privilege at the start of the 104th Congress (1995–1997), though Democrats restored it when they controlled the chamber during the 110th and 111th Congresses (2007–2011).²⁷

Winning congressional attention for their local agendas, and simply expressing their patriotism, sometimes proved difficult for Territorial Delegates. Representing an island that was removed from the U.S. mainland presented Guamanian Delegate Robert Underwood with numerous challenges. "I always point this out, that in the course of trying to do legislative work here in Congress, frequently when legislation is passed, unless it specifically mentions Guam or it specifically mentions territories, it is normally ignored," he said.²⁸ Underwood often made a point of including his island in legislative discussions whenever possible, such as when he successfully lobbied for Guam's inclusion in the national World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.²⁹

Leadership Opportunities

House Party Leadership

House leadership opportunities for Hispanic Americans expanded as their numbers and length of service increased, allowing them to accrue the requisite seniority to participate in party leadership. For example, only three Hispanic Members won their first House election in 1982, but all of them went on to serve

more than 10 years. In 1992, 10 Hispanic Members were first elected, and eight served more than 10 years. At the start of the 112th Congress (2011–2013), 31 total Hispanic Members of Congress served in the House and Senate, and 14 had served in Congress for 10 years or more.³⁰

Leadership opportunities for Hispanic Members also increased as a result of the legislative reforms of the 1970s. These changes decentralized power in Congress, made individual House Members more influential, and provided greater coordinating authority within House leadership. To operate in this new environment, Speakers quickly learned that effective leadership required building a bigger, more diverse inner circle. In addition to the Speaker, the Majority Leader, and the Majority Whip, leadership in the House began to expand, including the chair and vice-chair of the party caucus and the four deputy whips.³¹



Speaker Thomas Foley of Washington (center) meets with members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. As post-Watergate reforms decentralized power in the House, Speakers began to broaden their leadership circles to appeal to a greater number of rank-and-file Members.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

Contemporary Hispanic Members of Congress were elected to a number of leadership positions in the House Democratic Caucus. In 1987, California's Tony Coelho became the first elected Democratic Whip. This is the highest congressional party leadership post that any Hispanic American has achieved to date. Coelho first came to the attention of party leaders through his fundraising talents, quickly leading to his appointment as chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) as a sophomore Member.³² This positioned him to recruit strong candidates for House races and build a broad base of support among Members during his rise to power.³³ In late 2002 Robert Menendez was elected chairman of the House Democratic Caucus after serving as its vice chairman since 1998. Menendez held the chairmanship until December 2005, shortly before he was appointed to the U.S. Senate in January 2006.

Beyond the elected leadership positions in the House and within the Democratic Caucus, the Speaker has the discretion to create new appointed positions with leadership responsibilities. In 1977, for instance, Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill of Massachusetts authorized the Democratic Whip, John

Bill Richardson of New Mexico (left) confers with fellow House Members William Gray III of Pennsylvania (center) and Esteban Torres of California (right).

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



Brademas of Indiana, to expand the whip organization to include a broader coalition. By the beginning of the 1990s, almost one in five Democratic Members served in the whip system.³⁴ Among the Hispanic Members appointed Chief Deputy Whip were Bill Richardson of New Mexico (1993), Robert Menendez of New Jersey (1997), and Ed Pastor of Arizona (1999); Esteban Torres of California became a Deputy Whip in 1991.³⁵ More recently, then-Minority Leader and future Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California appointed fellow Californian Xavier Becerra to the post of Assistant to the Speaker in 2006.³⁶

Because of the smaller number of Hispanic Republican Members, only two Members served in a Republican leadership position. In 2001, Lincoln Diaz-Balart was appointed to the committee that develops policies for the Republican Conference. When the Republicans gained control of the House in 1995, Diaz-Balart was appointed to the Rules Committee, which determines the conditions under which major bills are debated. He remained there until his retirement from the House in 2011. Representative Devin Nunes of California was appointed assistant majority whip in his first term in the 108th Congress (2003–2005). He was later appointed vice chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee.



Lincoln Diaz-Balart of Florida served in two Republican leadership positions during his service in the House from 1993 to 2011. In 1995, Diaz-Balart won a spot on the Rules Committee; in 2001, Speaker J. Dennis Hastert of Illinois appointed him to the Republican Policy Committee, which develops the party's legislative agenda.

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Senate Party Leadership

Four Hispanics served in the Senate during this period, making it improbable that any of them would hold a leadership position, but Robert Menendez became chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee in late 2008.³⁷ On the Republican side, Senator Mel Martinez was elected in early 2007 as chairman of the Republican National Committee, to raise funds and act as the party's principal spokesman. But after 10 months he left the position "to get back to my main job, my real obligation and passion"—serving Florida in the Senate.³⁸

Hispanic Committee Leaders and Assignments

Members such as Robert Garcia and California's Edward Roybal used their positions as subcommittee chairmen to draw attention to legislative interests that benefited their districts and Hispanic Americans generally. Overall, many

Members of this generation gained institutional seniority during their long careers and held prominent committee assignments. Moreover, Hispanic Members' continuous service provided them a pathway to committee and subcommittee leadership by enabling them to gain expertise in certain policy areas.

House Committee Assignments

The Interior and Insular Affairs Committee (also called the Natural Resources or Resources Committee) was the most popular assignment for House Hispanic Members during this period. Twenty-six Hispanic Members served on this panel, which regulates the U.S. territories, public lands, and water and environmental issues.³⁹ These issues were popular among Southwestern and Western Members, as well as among Territorial Delegates and the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioners. A total of 10 Resident Commissioners and Hispanic Territorial Delegates served on this panel.⁴⁰

Eighteen Hispanic Members served on the Education and Labor Committee (also called the Education and the Workforce Committee and the Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee) and the same number served on the Foreign Affairs Committee (also called the International Relations Committee). Clearly, those committees with jurisdiction over bilingual education, immigration, labor, loans for small businesses, and relations with Latin American countries provide numerous opportunities for Hispanic Members to shape policy.

Hispanic Members were also assigned to the House's most prestigious committees more often than in previous generations. The Appropriations, Rules, and Ways and Means Committees are exclusive assignments, meaning that Republican Conference and Democratic Caucus rules require Members serving on these committees to relinquish their other committee assignments. Additionally, the scope of these panels spans the entire federal government.⁴¹ Thus, belonging to these committees immediately vaults a Member to the center of the House leadership circle.

In previous generations, only four Hispanic Members served on one of these choice panels; Joachim Octave Fernández of Louisiana, Antonio M. Fernández of New Mexico, Joseph Montoya of New Mexico, and Edward Roybal of California served on the Appropriations Committee. Of the Hispanic Members first elected since 1976, 20 have served on prestigious committees. (The Appropriations Committee has had 12 Hispanic members, Budget has had seven, Ways and Means has had three, and Rules has had two.)⁴² Three Hispanic Members first elected since 1976 have risen to subcommittee chairmanships on one of these committees. Henry Bonilla of Texas became chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies. His 2001 appointment as one of the "cardinals" of the House—a reference to the 12 Appropriations subcommittee chairmen—passed over two more-senior colleagues.⁴³ Representative José Serrano of New York was another cardinal, chairing the Subcommittee on Financial Services and Government Reform in the 110th and 111th Congresses. Representative Lincoln Diaz-Balart of Florida also chaired the Legislative and Budget Process Subcommittee under the Rules Committee in the 109th Congress (2005–2007).



As the head of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus from 1981 to 1984, New York's Robert Garcia (right) represented Hispanic interests in meetings with President Ronald Reagan.

Image courtesy of the Ronald Reagan Library/National Archives and Records Administration

Edward Roybal of California (second from left), chairs a congressional hearing in 1992. Congressional Hispanic Caucus colleague Kika de la Garza of Texas (far left) sits next to Roybal.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



In previous generations, only a handful of Hispanic Members chaired subcommittees. Forty-one percent of Hispanic Members first elected since 1976 (22 of 54) chaired at least one subcommittee; eight have chaired multiple subcommittees. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida chaired the most subcommittees, four under the International Relations Committee (she went on to chair the full committee): Africa; International Economic Policy and Trade; International Operations and Human Rights; and the Middle East and Central Asia.⁴⁴

Senate Committee Assignments

The Senate has a less hierarchical structure and a much smaller membership than the House, so the role of committees and subcommittees in that chamber is very different. With far fewer Senators, each serves on many more committees, diluting the importance of a single prestigious panel.⁴⁵ The four Hispanic Senators serving in this era held committees assignments covering issues that were relatively similar to those covered by their House colleagues; three (Mel Martinez, Ken Salazar, and Robert Menendez) served on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Martinez, Menendez, and Marco Rubio of Florida have served on the Foreign Relations Committee.⁴⁶

Two Hispanic Senators elected since 1976 have attained subcommittee leadership. Martinez chaired the Subcommittee on African Affairs (under the Foreign Relations Committee) in the 109th Congress. Menendez has chaired three subcommittees during his Senate career including two in the 112th Congress: Housing, Transportation and Community Development Subcommittee (under the Banking Committee); and of the Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, and Global Narcotics Affairs Subcommittee (under the Foreign Relations Committee).⁴⁷

Congressional Hispanic Caucus

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus followed patterns established by constituency caucuses using an informal group to serve as a clearinghouse for information and as a networking hub. Before the emergence of these caucuses, such groups served



Henry Bonilla of Texas served in the House from 1993 to 2007. During Bonilla's tenure, he chaired the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

social or relatively narrow policy ends. The success of the Congressional Black Caucus in effecting policy change and increasing Black Americans' legislative input served as a model for other minority groups in Congress.⁴⁸

The contemporary Congress retains a number of devices to bring Members together in ways that attempt to transcend parties and committees. The Hispanic Caucus provides an alternative to the party organizations and committee networks in that it is based on issues of common concern to the Hispanic community. Junior Members can develop leadership skills and policy strengths, but for most Hispanic Members, the caucus provides the opportunity to sort out their priorities.⁴⁹ Though they belonged to the same caucus, Hispanic Members often had a wide variety of agendas given their diverse constituencies.

The caucus worked by unanimous consent: If unanimity could not be achieved, its members were free to vote individually. On one level, this recognized the group's regional diversity enabling Members with different ideological and ethnic outlooks to reach a consensus in the caucus. The frequent inability to reach unanimous consent was attributed to the Hispanic Caucus's early bipartisan composition and the diverse legislative interests of its members. The lack of cohesiveness often circumscribed its ability to exercise power as a distinct bloc. On issues such as immigration reform, border control, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Hispanic Members split because of their constituencies, their regional differences, and their ethnicities. When asked about the caucus's effectiveness as a coalition in 1992, Edward Roybal commented, "The word coalition to me would mean ... a group of individuals that finally take a united action in support or against any particular subject matter. The Hispanic Caucus can not take a united action because the Hispanic Caucus ... [includes] Republicans.... On the other hand, there are individuals within the caucus that have taken the opportunity to be supportive of one another on various issues ... [which] have nothing to do with the caucus. We do it as individuals and we have been able to form a coalition of a sort."⁵⁰

After its formation in December 1976, the Hispanic Caucus aggressively pursued its legislative interests. It criticized President James Earl (Jimmy) Carter after he nominated or appointed few of more than 600 Hispanic candidates to federal positions in his administration after the 1976 elections. Consequently, President Carter agreed to name more Latinos to administration positions. The caucus also worked to preserve programs for bilingual education and improve voter registration. Additionally, the caucus helped Members obtain desirable committee assignments, provided information to non-Hispanic Members with Hispanic constituencies, and brought public focus to issues that affected the Hispanic community as a whole.⁵¹

In the 1980s, caucus chairmen such as Robert Garcia and Bill Richardson seized on the group's increasing size to expand its institutional influence. During Garcia's tenure (1980–1984), the caucus delivered a concerted response to immigration reform. According to one scholar, Garcia used his position as chairman of the House Census and Population Subcommittee to bring the issue of immigration reform and its effects on Hispanics to prominent attention during Hispanic Heritage Week in 1981. Chairman Richardson (1984–1985) sought maximum media exposure for the caucus's opposition to an immigration



Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus meet with President Jimmy Carter in 1978. One of the caucus's first actions after its 1976 creation was to press the Carter administration to include more Hispanics in leadership positions in the federal government.

Image courtesy of the Jimmy Carter Library/National Archives and Records Administration

reform bill and its first delegation trip to Latin America in December 1984. Richardson released a number of statements outlining the caucus's position on democratization in Latin America.⁵²

The caucus had a conflicted relationship with the Ronald W. Reagan administration (1981–1989). At times it fought the White House over funding for domestic programs, immigration reform legislation, and its policies toward Nicaragua and El Salvador. At other times it worked alongside Hispanic officials within the Reagan administration. A caucus staffer recalled working with Republicans in “the White House, the campaign, the transition office, Senate staff, House staff, national organizations, everyone.... Probably every Hispanic that was appointed within the administration, we probably had some contact with.”⁵³ Other divisions within the caucus emerged during this period as one of its founders, Henry González, had left the group by 1987.⁵⁴ Republicans Manuel Luján, Jr., of New Mexico and Delegate Ben Blaz of Guam also disagreed with their Democratic colleagues on a range of public policy matters.⁵⁵

But during this period, the caucus gained additional institutional clout as its members held more-senior positions within the House committee and leadership structures.⁵⁶ Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen's membership in the caucus illustrated its growing diversity. Representative Luján, who retired at the end of the 100th Congress (1987–1989), served as Secretary of the Interior in the George H. W. Bush administration (1989–1993).⁵⁷

The caucus began to publicize its legislative agenda in the 100th and 101st Congresses (1987–1991).⁵⁸ Before the 102nd Congress (1991–1993), caucus members submitted legislation individually when the caucus could not come to a unanimous decision. Chairman Solomon Ortiz of Texas pursued a more active agenda. “It seemed to me that we just talked about issues, and then everyone would go about their business,” Ortiz recalled. “We weren't getting any legislation passed. So I said, ‘Let's go out and get some legislation passed.’”⁵⁹ The caucus introduced bills such as the Hispanic Access to Higher Education Bill of 1991 (H.R. 3098) and the Voting Rights Improvement Act of 1992

In this undated photo, President Ronald Reagan speaks to members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC). The CHC held different stances on issues such as domestic spending, immigration, and Latin America than those of the Reagan administration.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



(H.R. 4312; P.L. 102-344). Ortiz attributed the caucus's activity and institutional savvy to its maturity: "It used to be that we were very new to Congress and really didn't know our way around.... Now that a lot of us have been here for several years, we're more knowledgeable and self-confident."⁶⁰

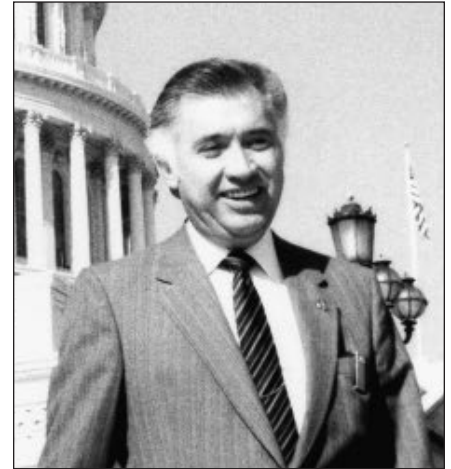
Hispanic Caucus growth reflected the rising number of Hispanics in the national legislature. At its inception, the caucus started with five Members, but grew to 14 at the start of the 100th Congress (11 voting Members, one Resident Commissioner, and two Delegates) and would remain constant until the start of the 103rd Congress (1993–1995).⁶¹ In 1993, its ranks swelled to 19 (17 voting Members and two nonvoting Members), a result of the 1992 reapportionment that created six new districts favorable to Hispanic-American candidates.

The 103rd Congress marked other notable changes. The caucus garnered two voting members of Puerto Rican descent (Nydia Velázquez of New York and Luis Gutierrez of Illinois), two Republicans (Lincoln Diaz-Balart of Florida and Henry Bonilla of Texas), and a Cuban-American Democrat, Robert Menendez of New Jersey. Both Gutierrez and Menendez were the first Hispanic Representatives from their respective states. Velázquez was the first Puerto Rican woman elected to Congress. The caucus's institutional power increased when Esteban Torres, Ed Pastor, and José Serrano won seats on the House Appropriations Committee. Bill Richardson also became one of four chief deputy whips in the House.⁶²

During the 103rd Congress, the caucus took advantage of its numbers and formed three task forces to better pursue its legislative agenda. Three members also sat on the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which assigns Members to House committees. However, a number of issues divided the caucus along regional lines. For example, although the caucus worked to block a \$1 billion unemployment bill in October 1993, Hispanic Caucus members split on their support of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).⁶³ With the shift to Republican control in the 104th Congress, many of the Democratic Members with senior posts as committee and subcommittee chairs lost their positions and began working against many Republican initiatives.⁶⁴

The caucus's relationship with President William J. (Bill) Clinton was cordial. It sought to protect the interests of Hispanic Americans and often disagreed with the President's positions on social issues, but Clinton consulted the group about legislation, including a July 1993 meeting to discuss his budget proposal. The caucus also leveraged Hispanic electoral support for Democrats into policy concessions and pressured the President to use his influence to counter Republican legislative initiatives, particularly on welfare reform.⁶⁵ The caucus grew stronger after welcoming three new members during the 105th Congress (1997–1999) and after the rise of Robert Menendez and Ed Pastor to House party leadership positions (Democratic Party Caucus vice chairman and chief deputy whip, respectively).⁶⁶

The caucus had more of a mixed record with the George W. Bush administration. The decision to deregulate parts of the economy split the caucus between Members of Rust Belt states and Sunbelt Members, who benefited more from recent Bush policies. President Bush met with the caucus in April 2001 to discuss immigration, education, and small business issues, but the President and the legislators disagreed



During Solomon Ortiz's tenure as chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the group introduced the Voting Rights Improvement Act that became law in 1992. The Texas Representative attributed the caucus' active agenda to the fact that its members had accrued years of service and become "more knowledgeable and self-confident."

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration



Nydia Velázquez of New York, first elected in 1992, became the first woman of Puerto Rican descent to serve in Congress. Later, as chairwoman of the Small Business Committee (from 2007 to 2011), Velázquez became the first Hispanic woman to chair a full congressional committee.

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over their approaches to welfare reform, affirmative action, and education. By 2007 President Bush and Hispanic Members of Congress came together on changes to the immigration system, but that initiative was blocked by deadlock in the 109th and 110th Congresses (2005–2009).⁶⁷

Congressional Hispanic Conference

For much of its history, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus has had a greater number of Democrats than Republicans. Manuel Luján, Jr., of New Mexico, who was the caucus's longest-serving Republican Member, found common ground with Democrats blocking immigration reform measures such as the Simpson–Mazzoli bill. As the numbers of Republican caucus members grew (Henry Bonilla, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Lincoln Diaz-Balart), the decision to let Members vote individually kept partisan tensions to a minimum.

Bipartisanship dissolved in the Hispanic Caucus in the late 1990s, eventually precipitating a formal split between Democrats and Republicans. In 1997, two Democratic members of the caucus visited Cuba and met with Fidel Castro. In protest of the visit and of the absence of criticism of repressive aspects of the Castro regime, two Republican caucus members—both Cuban Americans from South Florida—announced their departure from the group.⁶⁸ From 1997 to 2003, Hispanic-American Republicans did not participate in the caucus, and a second episode led to the creation of a separate group entirely. In 2003, the Hispanic Caucus opposed President George W. Bush's nomination of Miguel Estrada to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia because of Estrada's record and perceived lack of sensitivity toward minority communities. The caucus also objected to Estrada's nomination partly because the appeals judgeship was regarded as a stepping stone to the U.S. Supreme Court.⁶⁹ Hispanic Republicans, who believed that the caucus's animus toward Estrada resulted from political partisanship, formed the Congressional Hispanic Conference.⁷⁰

HISPANIC AMERICANS' LEGISLATIVE INTERESTS

Civil Rights

In the late 20th century, Hispanic Members built on the efforts of African-American Members and of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in championing institutions within the federal government that protected the civil rights of racial and ethnic minorities. The Hispanic Caucus partnered with black Members on several legislative initiatives of mutual benefit. For example, caucus chairman José Serrano actively worked with CBC chairman Kweisi Mfume of Maryland in the 103rd Congress on legislation including the Clinton administration's health care overhaul and unemployment compensation.⁷¹

Framed within the experiences of Hispanic Members, civil rights took on new and different components. Using the language and imagery of the previous generation's civil rights movement, Hispanic Members debated issues like bilingual education, voting rights, Puerto Rican statehood, and immigration. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus helped drive policy in the House as it related to Hispanic Americans, but was often beset by internal debates over form and function.



In the latter 20th century, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) partnered with the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) on civil rights, health care, and unemployment issues. From left to right: the CHC's Lucille Roybal-Allard of California and José Serrano of New York meet with Maryland Representative Kweisi Mfume of the CBC.

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Voting Rights

The 1975 extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (P.L. 94-73) reaffirmed the U.S. Attorney General's ability to veto election laws and regulations in areas of the U.S. where voting participation, especially among minority citizens, fell below a set standard. This extension also covered the North and West, and it brought "language minorities"—people who spoke English as a second language—within its protection. It required bilingual ballots and voting materials in areas where English literacy was below the national average.⁷² This change made subsequent updates to the Voting Rights Act (VRA)—especially the 1982 version, which extended the VRA for 25 years and its bilingual requirement for 10 years—a major priority for Hispanic Members and for Hispanic civic groups that tracked legislative activity.⁷³

Hispanic Members again played a major role in the debates over the Voting Rights Act extensions in 1992 and 2006. In 1992, the Hispanic Caucus sponsored and helped pass the Voting Rights Language Assistance Act (P.L. 102-344), which lengthened the bilingual requirements by 15 years. This major accomplishment dovetailed with a period of noted Hispanic political growth.⁷⁴ "The Congressional Hispanic Caucus," said Chairman Solomon Ortiz, "is committed to giving Americans, all Americans, including citizens whose first language is not English, the opportunity to fully participate in the electoral process."⁷⁵ In 2006, Hispanic Members fought attempts to shorten the shelf life of the VRA's bilingual requirements, arguing again that all citizens, whether native-born or naturalized, deserved a fair chance to vote.⁷⁶

Bilingual Education

Contemporary Hispanic Members paid particular attention to the status of federal bilingual education programs, since many of these programs affected Spanish-speaking students. Legislation for bilingual education was often packaged in updates to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).



Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada-del Río supported the creation of the U.S. Department of Education as well as bilingual education programs administered by the agency.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Photography Collection

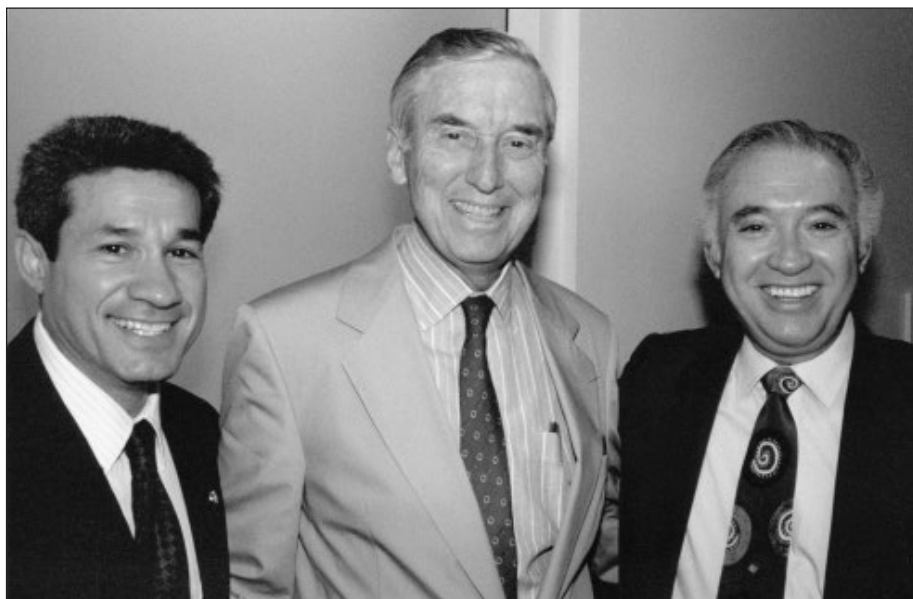
Representatives Frank Tejada of Texas (left) and Solomon Ortiz of Texas (right) meet with Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

Both Title VII of the ESEA of 1968 (P.L. 90-247) and the 1974 Supreme Court decision *Lau v. Nichols* (414 U.S. 563) required that special assistance be given to students whose ability to understand English was limited or nonexistent, but until the late 1970s, the United States lacked oversight of the public school system. President Carter's proposal for a separate Education Department included provisions for bilingual education programs. The initial Education Department bill was referred to the House Education and Labor Committee, where Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada-del Río spoke passionately in favor of creating the agency. "Bilingual education should be monitored, refined, and improved," Corrada-del Río said during the debate, "so that the high hopes which it has engendered in the hearts and the minds of those who need it are not thwarted."⁷⁷ Title VII had rarely come up in subsequent reauthorizations of ESEA, but when the new Education Department proposed guidelines for enforcing bilingual instruction in 1980, some Members of the House called it a federal power grab, setting the tone for much of the next decade.⁷⁸

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and those who supported bilingual education came under increased pressure. Politicians began advocating English immersion programs and English as a Second Language programs as alternatives to bilingual instruction.⁷⁹ Conservatives in Congress also proposed replacing government-funded programs for speakers of other languages with block grants, which give states more control over how money is spent. Block grants became popular in Republican appropriations packages in the late 1990s, and supporters of bilingual instruction worried that these grants would fatally undercut bilingual education.

Congress did not renew the ESEA in 2000, but provided a stopgap measure until the 107th Congress (2001–2003) as they worked to create a long-term solution. Democrats focused on improving the accountability of education programs while Republicans favored converting programs into block grants.⁸⁰ On May 14, 2001, the House Education and the Workforce Committee



reported the No Child Left Behind Act (H.R. 1), a complex bipartisan measure that combined several programs, including bilingual education, into block grants.⁸¹ By December 2001, when the conference report for H.R. 1 arrived in the House, Hispanic Members emphasized the positive aspects of No Child Left Behind.⁸²

Border Control and Immigration

Both voting rights and bilingual education were part of a larger debate over immigration and America's changing demographics in the late 20th century. In particular, the growth of illegal immigration from Latin America became one of the most explosive issues in Congress beginning in the 1970s.

Widespread political instability in Central and South America combined with an economic "push-pull" relationship with the United States fueled both legal and illegal migration from the region.⁸³ The nature of unauthorized entry into the United States makes it difficult to compile accurate statistics on how many people have crossed the border in the last few decades; however, citing a collection of published sources, the Congressional Research Service estimates the number of undocumented aliens in the United States as just short of 11 million, doubling estimates from 1996 and tripling those from 1986. According to 2010 figures, those in the United States illegally make up 28 percent of the foreign-born population.⁸⁴

Hispanic Members of Congress serving in the late 20th century and early 21st century were universally wary that policies meant to curb illegal immigration had the potential to discriminate against Hispanic Americans or legal immigrants from Mexico, Central America, or South America. "Building a 'tortilla curtain' certainly is not the answer," argued Manuel Luján, Jr., of New Mexico in 1980, then the sole Republican in the Hispanic Caucus. Multiple attempts at immigration reform failed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but divisions in the caucus over the terms of the debate and its legislative tactics often limited Hispanic Members' collective influence.

Unsuccessful Attempts at Immigration Reform

Alien Adjustment and Employment Act of 1977

On August 4, 1977, President Carter brought attention to the illegal immigration issue when he asked Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration reform package. Known as the "Carter Plan," the President's proposal adjusted the immigration status of undocumented aliens who registered with the federal government for permanent or temporary residency in the United States. Carter's proposal also included possible deterrents to illegal immigration: new penalties for U.S. businesses engaged in the "pattern or practice" of hiring undocumented workers; additional resources to patrol the U.S.-Mexican border; and binding agreements with Latin American governments to crack down on human smuggling.⁸⁵ The following October, H.R. 9531 and S. 2522, representing the President's proposal, were introduced in the House and Senate.

Members disagreed over various aspects of the bills, but both the House and the Senate versions of the bill met with firm resistance from Hispanic Members and Latino civil rights organizations.⁸⁶ Edward Roybal, then chairman of the



Manuel Luján, Jr., of New Mexico served in the U.S. House for nearly two decades. Luján left in 1989 to serve as Secretary of the Interior in President George H.W. Bush's Cabinet.

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Photography Collection



Immigration reform remained a central and sometimes contentious issue even within the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Caucus Chairman Edward Roybal of California, pictured at the center, was critical of immigration legislation that he thought might hurt employment opportunities for Hispanic Americans and legal immigrants.

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office



South Texas Representative Kika de la Garza, who chaired the Agriculture Committee, disagreed with Hispanic colleagues representing urban constituencies over immigration reform efforts that would have negatively affected migrant farm workers.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

newly formed Congressional Hispanic Caucus, predicted that the policies would create “a segregated, card-carrying portion of our population,” as the *New York Times* quoted him.⁸⁷ Moreover, he predicted that legal Hispanic immigrants and Hispanic Americans would suffer unfairly under employer penalties.⁸⁸ The legislation gained little traction in Congress, but in 1978 the Carter administration created the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy to study options for the future.⁸⁹

Simpson–Mazzoli Legislation, 1982–1984

In March 1982, Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming and Representative Romano Mazzoli of Kentucky, the chairmen of Senate and House subcommittees on immigration, introduced comprehensive immigration reform bills in their respective chambers (S. 2222 and H.R. 7357). This legislation included sanctions against employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers; sought to legalize the immigration status of millions of undocumented workers; created a temporary program for agricultural workers; and instituted new procedures restricting asylum and deportation cases.⁹⁰

A majority of the members of the Hispanic Caucus opposed the bill, particularly employer sanctions, which they believed would discriminate against Hispanic Americans.⁹¹ “It is easy to identify those people, and it is easy to assume immediately that those people are illegal and everybody else is legal,” Representative Coelho said in an impassioned speech on the House Floor.⁹²

Although the bill passed the Senate in August 1982, the House version stalled. Members had introduced nearly 300 amendments to the bill; according to one account, nearly 100 came from the Hispanic Caucus alone, and Edward Roybal threatened to stall consideration by requesting votes on every one of his measures.⁹³ Ultimately, the first version of the Simpson–Mazzoli legislation died at the end of the 97th Congress (1981–1983).

Simpson and Mazzoli resubmitted versions of their legislation in the 98th Congress (H.R. 1510 and S. 529), but the House version never made it out of the Rules Committee. Having nearly doubled their numbers in the 1982 election, Hispanic Members changed tactics. Instead of working against the legislation by flooding the bill with amendments, they attempted to work within the system by appealing directly to House leadership for a chance to weigh in on immigration reform.⁹⁴ After Speaker O’Neill pulled the bill from the House Floor, in part because of opposition from the Hispanic Caucus, he challenged Hispanic legislators to develop their own proposal to counter the Simpson–Mazzoli legislation in the next Congress. Freshman New Mexico Democrat and caucus member Bill Richardson said, “It’s important that we not be viewed as obstructionist. We have to come up with a serious alternative.”⁹⁵

But Representative Roybal’s alternative bill (H.R. 4909), introduced in the next session, did not have the caucus’s full support.⁹⁶ The legislation attempted to modify the Simpson–Mazzoli bill by eliminating employer sanctions and easing restrictions to legalization.⁹⁷ Hispanic activists supported the bill, and Caucus Chairman Garcia promoted it at press conferences, but other members of the Hispanic Caucus were hesitant. Representative Luján, the caucus’s sole Republican, opposed the legalization program. South Texas Representative



The Congressional Hispanic Caucus gathers on the East Front House steps of the U.S. Capitol, circa mid-1980s. From left to right: Henry B. González of Texas; Manuel Luján, Jr., of New Mexico; Jaime Fuster of Puerto Rico; Robert Garcia of New York; Bill Richardson of New Mexico; Tony Coelho of California; Ron de Lugo of the Virgin Islands; Matthew Martínez of California; Edward Roybal of California; and Esteban Torres of California.

Image courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration

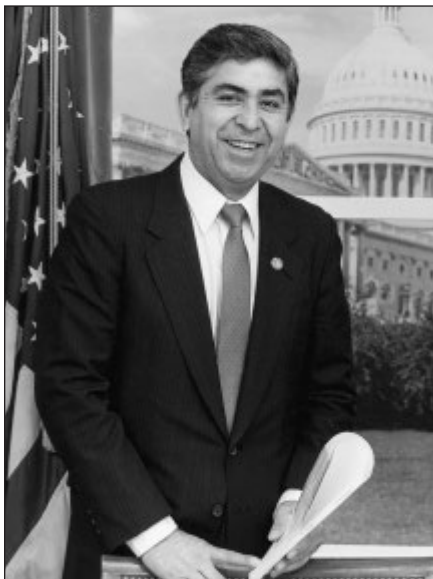
Eligio (Kika) de la Garza, who represented a large farming district, was frustrated that Roybal had removed provisions for temporary agricultural workers that were included in the Simpson–Mazzoli bill. Also, unlike Roybal, whose long-standing commitment to immigration reform had been vocal, other Hispanic legislators feared the political fallout from endorsing such a position and considered immigration reform a “no-win” issue at the polls.⁹⁸

Roybal’s bill never received a hearing, but the newest Simpson–Mazzoli bill, which was universally opposed by the Hispanic Caucus, narrowly passed the House 216 to 211, before dying in conference with the Senate.⁹⁹ Though it never became law, the Simpson–Mazzoli legislation revealed ideological and generational fissures within the caucus that caused some of its members to be more willing to compromise on future bills.¹⁰⁰

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986

The Simpson–Mazzoli proposal was infused with new life in the 99th Congress (1985–1987); bolstered by the sponsorship of House Judiciary Chairman Peter Rodino of New Jersey, the bill was also trimmed of some of its more controversial provisions. The bill (H.R. 3810) still fined employers for knowingly hiring undocumented workers, but offered legal status to those who had entered the United States before 1982 and had since lived in the country continuously.¹⁰¹ The measure received support from a group of junior caucus members who wanted to call attention to issues affecting Hispanic communities and were willing to negotiate on portions of the proposal. Representative Richardson believed employer sanctions were a particularly grievous but inevitable part of any immigration reform, and he sought safeguards against discrimination.¹⁰² Albert Bustamante regularly described the bill as “imperfect.”¹⁰³ “We must start formulating an immigration policy. We have been vacillating from year to year,” he told the *New York Times*. “That fomented anger and misperceptions of which Hispanics are often the target.”¹⁰⁴

Esteban Torres, Solomon Ortiz, and Tony Coelho joined Richardson and Bustamante in voting for the legislation—breaking from the other six voting caucus members.¹⁰⁵ Opponents of the bill, such as Representative Garcia,



Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus were nearly evenly divided over the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which passed Congress and was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. Albert Bustamante of Texas, pictured above, described it as “imperfect” but was one of five Hispanic Members to vote for it; six others opposed the bill.

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

likened the employer sanctions to “Jim Crow laws,” setting up 20 million Hispanic Americans for “separate and unequal treatment.”¹⁰⁶ Roybal, who had spent six years blocking immigration reform measures in the House, said the bill was “the worst piece of legislation we have passed in 25 years in Congress.”¹⁰⁷ President Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-603) into law on November 6, 1986.¹⁰⁸

Immigration Reform in the 1990s

Increased migration across the U.S.-Mexico border, especially via human smuggling, renewed efforts at immigration control in the mid-1990s and led to calls to strengthen the Immigration Reform and Control Act.¹⁰⁹

In 1990, Hispanic lawmakers played a key role in one of the largest immigration reforms in more than 60 years. With support from the Hispanic Caucus, Congress gradually increased quotas and issued a greater variety of visas aimed at admitting a larger pool of educated immigrants. The bill also streamlined the process for admitting family members of immigrants, stayed the deportations of Salvadoran refugees, and made discrimination based on immigrants’ political beliefs or sexual orientation more difficult.¹¹⁰ Working with the Congressional Black Caucus and a few California Members, Hispanic Members successfully lobbied for the removal of a national identification requirement that they felt would unfairly target minorities.¹¹¹

The next major push for immigration reform occurred in 1996. President Bill Clinton signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-208) into law on September 30. The law strengthened federal control over the U.S.-Mexican border, streamlined deportation processes, and increased restrictions against undocumented workers.¹¹² Additionally, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193)—popularly known as the Welfare Reform Act—restricted federal aid to legal immigrants, including Social Security, health care, public housing, education, and unemployment benefits.¹¹³

Caucus members opposed cuts to federal benefits. Representing a working-class Florida district, Lincoln Diaz-Balart was one of three Republicans who did not sign the Contract with America in 1994, because of its proposed welfare cuts to legal immigrants.¹¹⁴ “When people follow the law and they pay taxes, they shouldn’t be singled out for discrimination,” he said, referring to the Welfare Reform Act.¹¹⁵ Democrat Solomon Ortiz of Texas, too, implored his colleagues not to penalize legal immigrants. “The greatest danger to an immigration debate in this country is the merging and confusing of issues concerning legal and illegal immigration,” he noted in 1996. “As [a] Representative of a border district, I am uniquely aware of the burden that illegal immigration poses on local communities.”¹¹⁶

Border Control and Immigration after September 11, 2001

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, largely reset the immigration debate. The U.S.-Mexico border, once the major focus of that debate, became part of a much larger national story as Congress turned its attention toward airport and homeland security.

Hispanic Members were concerned that the new focus would encroach on Hispanic-Americans' civil rights. Two Hispanic Senators became key figures in attempts at reshaping immigration laws. Drawing on his childhood experiences as a Cuban immigrant, Florida Senator Mel Martinez championed the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S. 1291), which provided a path to an education and permanent citizenship for the minor children of undocumented immigrants.¹¹⁷ He also opposed efforts to build a 1,500-mile wall along the U.S. border with Mexico, noting, "What the wall symbolizes is not what we want—the face of America we want to show."¹¹⁸ In 2005 and 2006, he teamed with then-Senator Barack Obama of Illinois to advance legislation that coupled border enforcement provisions and a guest-worker program to address the issue of illegal immigration "in a realistic fashion without providing amnesty."¹¹⁹

When conservatives attempted to re-draft immigration laws in 2006—making illegal immigration a felony and punishable by imprisonment—Democratic Senator Ken Salazar supported the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (S. 2611) as a compromise. The crux of the reform included provisions for border security and a guest-worker program that would affect an estimated 12 million individuals who had immigrated illegally.¹²⁰ After a brief period of deadlock, the bill passed in the Senate but died in the House.¹²¹

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

In the late 1980s Mexico opened its markets to international investment, and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, looking to reinforce his country's economic growth, proposed a free trade agreement with the United States. President George H.W. Bush, with Congress's initial backing, agreed to Salinas de Gortari's offer in September 1990.¹²²

In a public letter, Bill Richardson advised the Bush administration to jump at the chance while it could and to "develop a long-term strategy for free trade throughout the hemisphere." Although the initiative began in the Bush administration, President Clinton subsequently supported such an agreement.¹²³ Representative Dan Rostenkowski of Illinois, then chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, introduced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as H.R. 3450 on November 4, 1993.

Organized labor unions tended to object to NAFTA because they feared losing jobs to Mexico where labor was cheap. Labor unions often supported congressional Democrats, who balked at the proposal. The Clinton administration coordinated with business groups, lobbyists, and allies inside and outside of Congress to convince undecided Members to support the legislation. On the floor and in the Capitol hallways, a handful of Senators and House Members, including Richardson, rounded up votes for the NAFTA bill. Interestingly, *Congressional Quarterly* has noted that Clinton "[owed] his House victory more to Republicans than to his own party."¹²⁴ Although the final vote was decisive (234 to 200), votes among Hispanic Caucus members split along regional lines, nine to eight. Most of the caucus members from the Southwest voted for NAFTA, while those from other regions of the country voted against it.¹²⁵



Above is an image of the American flag which flew over the U.S. Capitol on the morning of September 11, 2001. Debates over border control and immigration were recast as national security issues after the terrorist attacks.

Image courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol



President Bill Clinton, far right, meets Congressional Hispanic Caucus members in 1998. The Clinton administration heavily courted caucus members to support the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993. Caucus members split on the issue along regional lines.

Image courtesy of the William J. Clinton Library/ National Archives and Records Administration



Ben Blaz of Guam was a highly decorated officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring as a brigadier general in 1980. From 1985 to 1993, Blaz represented Guam as a Delegate in the U.S. House.

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Legislative Interests in the Territories

Hispanic Members representing overseas territories often balanced their desire for greater autonomy with their desire to maintain a political and economic connection with the mainland United States. While the nonvoting Members carefully reviewed legislation to ensure that their territories received the same benefits that were accorded to the states, they also sought greater self-government regarding local matters. After voters on the tiny South Pacific island of Guam overwhelmingly chose a commonwealth relationship with the United States in a 1982 plebiscite, Guam Delegate Ben Blaz said, “We in Guam have embarked on a voyage of political self-determination—a desire on our part for greater local autonomy and an equal place in the American political family.”¹²⁶ The fact that their constituents had common experiences meant Territorial Delegates also looked after one another’s interests. Speaking for the other Delegates, Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada-del Río said, “We have to be constantly on alert to make sure we are included in bills.”¹²⁷

The geopolitical value of the offshore territories has traditionally been tied to America’s defense policy, and virtually every Territorial Delegate and Resident Commissioner has negotiated with U.S. military officials. Few instances were as contentious as the one involving the death of a Puerto Rican citizen during a naval live-ammunition exercise on the island of Vieques in 1999.¹²⁸ The incident—which sparked protests against continued bomb training—happened just days after Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero-Barceló spoke on the House Floor about the island, its veterans, and its participation in federal programs.¹²⁹ The outgoing Clinton administration arranged with Puerto Rico to end the target practice on Vieques in 2003.¹³⁰ From his seat on the Armed Services Committee, Delegate Ben Blaz paid particular attention to issues that affected the numerous naval and air bases in Guam. In 1991, his unusual request to close an air base there made headlines. Blaz, a former Marine Corps General, asked the U.S. government to relocate the Agana Naval Air Station to the northern region of the island to make way for a major expansion of Guam’s largest commercial airport.¹³¹

Puerto Rico, Section 936, and Statehood

The late 20th century was an era of political deadlock in Puerto Rico in which the future of the island’s relationship with the federal government was a major issue in virtually every election. Puerto Rico’s two major parties—the Partido Popular Democrático (Popular Democratic Party, or PPD), which supported commonwealth status, and the Partido Nuevo Progresista (New Progressive Party, or PNP), which supported statehood—alternately controlled the insular government. After PNP Resident Commissioner Jorge Luis Córdova-Díaz defeated PPD incumbent Santiago Polanco-Abreu in 1968, Resident Commissioners’ political affiliations alternated between the PPD and the PNP until 2008.¹³²

Intertwined in the status debate was the future of section 936 of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Since 1952, Puerto Rico had been under the auspices of section 931, which stipulated that after liquidating operations on the island American corporations could move their profits from Puerto Rican banks without paying federal taxes. Amended under the Tax Reform Act of

1976, section 931 was replaced by section 936, which allowed corporations to move their profits tax-free at any time. So-called 936 corporations became the backbone of the Puerto Rican economy for the next 20 years.¹³³

The tax breaks drew high-tech industries to the island, especially companies that manufactured precision instruments, alongside many pharmaceutical companies.¹³⁴ Because section 936 applied only while Puerto Rico remained a U.S. territory, the corporations that benefited from the policy tended to ally with the PPD.¹³⁵ Few seemed to support section 936 more than Antonio Colorado, who was handpicked by the PPD to protect the island's status as a tax-shelter in Washington from officials who wanted to rewrite the revenue code. Appointed after Resident Commissioner Jaime Fuster accepted a position on the insular supreme court, Colorado had served as Puerto Rico's chief economist and had spent years lobbying Congress in support of section 936. The *San Juan Star* noted that he knew "the ins and outs of Washington" and "more members of Congress than probably any other island resident."¹³⁶

Governor-turned-Resident Commissioner Carlos Antonio Romero-Barceló, who defeated Colorado in the 1992 election, became the key figure for Puerto Rican statehood and an opponent of section 936 in Washington. Like his predecessors, he equated admission to the Union with recognition of the island's political maturity. "By and large we have emerged as a people justifiably possessed of optimism and self-confidence—a people no longer willing to continue tolerating political inferiority," he argued.¹³⁷ Statehood, he concluded in 1980, "could show the world that here is a Latin people who have been accepted in the United States as brothers."¹³⁸ Scholars César Ayala and Rafael Bernabe have also pointed out that Romero-Barceló framed statehood within America's civil rights movement and the war on poverty.¹³⁹ Romero-Barceló predicted that statehood would ensure the island received a larger share of federal money while "[giving] investors a feeling of greater security."¹⁴⁰

When Congress considered ways to offset new tax breaks for small businesses on the mainland, Puerto Rico's history as a longstanding tax shelter came under heavy scrutiny. In May 1996 Romero-Barceló had called the island's revenue policy little more than "corporate welfare." But, recognizing the need to protect the benefits that attended fostering industry there, he argued that it was "preposterous ... that tax revenues collected on income earned in the Nation's poorest jurisdiction, Puerto Rico, be used to subsidize" industry in the states. He worked to replace the current arrangement with a system of wage-based credits for Puerto Rico, but the Small Business Job Protection Act, which became law in August 1996, rescinded what a business reporter for the *New York Times* called "the linchpin of this island's manufacturing-based economy."¹⁴¹

Despite Romero-Barceló's eight years in the House and the support of prominent mainland politicians, voters in two plebiscites in Puerto Rico in the 1990s favored maintaining the Estado Libre Asociado, the 1952 commonwealth agreement.¹⁴² "Commonwealth is only a name," a frustrated Romero-Barceló said in September 1997. "We're a territory. The biggest hoax in history was that Puerto Rico had a full measure of self-government."¹⁴³

Yet, greater self-determination was a goal the PPD and the PNP could agree on, one that had been sought since the first Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner



Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner Carlos Antonio Romero-Barceló supported the effort for statehood, believing admission to the Union would signal an end to the island's "political inferiority."

Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Photography Collection

was elected in 1900. Faced with House and Senate bills calling for a congressionally mandated plebiscite in the late 1980s, exasperated PPD Resident Commissioner Jaime Fuster criticized the mainland politicians who, he said, had an “extraordinary propensity to get drawn into Puerto Rico’s political status debate whenever it is to their advantage,” especially “during presidential campaigns where island votes in national conventions are at stake.”¹⁴⁴

The Territorial Delegates and Resident Commissioners often faced an uphill battle representing their constituents. “I don’t think you can be a Delegate in the House of Representatives,” Guam’s Robert Underwood mused, “and a day doesn’t go by in which you’re not reminded in some way, sometimes trivial, sometimes major, about not being able to vote on final passage of a bill.”¹⁴⁵

In the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), nonvoting Members won a symbolic victory when the House approved a change in the House Rules that allowed all Members a vote in the Committee of the Whole House. The Republican minority opposed the change since the four Delegates and one Resident Commissioner caucused with Democrats. To address these objections, the Democratic majority added a proviso that mandated an automatic re-vote if the Delegates and Resident Commissioner provided the winning margin. In the re-vote, statutory representatives would not be allowed to participate.¹⁴⁶ House Republicans unsuccessfully challenged the rule change in court. Initially during the 103rd Congress, Republicans demanded re-votes whenever a Delegate or Resident Commissioner voted in the Committee of the Whole. The votes from either Delegates or the Resident Commissioner, however, mattered in only three of 404 votes. Perhaps because of their limited power, Delegates and the Resident Commissioner voted in Committee of the Whole much more rarely than did the average House Member.¹⁴⁷

When the Republican Party gained control of the House in 1995, for the first time in 40 years, the new majority rescinded the rule.¹⁴⁸ Stung by this quick reversal of fortune, Underwood called the ability of Delegates to vote on the House Floor “a recognition that you are not interlopers in the nation’s affairs.”¹⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

Hispanic-American gains in the United States Congress over the last three decades have been remarkable, especially in the U.S. House of Representatives. Though their numbers on Capitol Hill are still disproportionately less than their percentage of the U.S. population, Hispanic Americans have steadily left their mark on Washington in both style and substance.¹⁵⁰ Since 1977, Hispanic Members have chaired powerful committees and subcommittees and have authored important legislation. They have been party leaders and directed national party organizations. They have held cabinet positions.

The development of congressional caucuses and interest groups that monitor and develop policies important to the Hispanic community has fostered its leaders’ increasing political sway. Indeed, as the Hispanic population in the U.S. continues to grow and as their advocates win powerful seats at the federal level, Hispanic Americans have become one of the most influential voting blocs in the

country. It is likely that Hispanic Americans will become more numerous and more powerful in Congress, especially if demographic trends continue as they have since the 1970s.

But gaining political representation has never been, and likely never will be, simple or straightforward. The experiences of Hispanic Members illustrate that no one person, party, or caucus can determine the needs, desires, or aspirations of America's Hispanic voters.¹⁵¹ The emergence of both the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (composed of Democrats) and the Congressional Hispanic Conference (composed of Republicans) is perhaps the clearest sign that political debate within the Hispanic community is alive and well. Still, regardless of party, Hispanic Members of Congress share an interest in many issues, including immigration, health care, and education, and whatever the future holds, they can draw inspiration from their rich history and hard-won victories.¹⁵²

NOTES

- 1 Lesley Clark, "Senator Martinez Seeking Immigration Solution," 30 March 2006, *Miami Herald*: 5; see also, Libby Copeland, "Risky Political Waters," 8 April 2006, *Washington Post*: C1. William E. Gibson, "Immigrants Rally behind Senate Bill," 2 April 2006, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*: n.p.
- 2 Martinez spoke often on the Senate Floor about immigration reform. See, for example, *Congressional Record*, Senate, 109th Cong., 2nd sess. (29 March 2006): S2519–S2520; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 109th Cong., 2nd sess. (7 April 2006): S3371–S3372.
- 3 Clark, "Senator Martinez Seeking Immigration Solution."
- 4 Sharon R. Ennis, Merarys Ríos-Vargas, and Nora G. Albert, "The Hispanic Population: 2010," <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf> (accessed 22 August 2012): 2.
- 5 J. W. Peltason, "Reapportionment Cases," in Kermit L. Hall, ed., *The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 826–827.
- 6 The foregoing figures are best understood within a three-tiered framework. First, there is the overall Hispanic population in the U.S., which these numbers reflect. But these numbers can be misleading. For instance, the population of Hispanic citizens is smaller when undocumented individuals and permanent residents are discounted. Moreover, electorally active individuals comprise an even smaller segment of the overall Hispanic population in the U.S. Also, Hispanics historically have had low voting rates and this varies by both region and group; Puerto Ricans, for example, have relatively low electoral participation rates. For more on this topic see two reports by the Pew Research Center, Mark H. Lopez, ed., "The Latino Electorate in 2010: More Voters, More Non-Voters," (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2011): 4–6 ; and Roberto Suro, Richard Fry, and Jeffrey Passel, "Hispanics and the 2004 Election: Population, Electorate, and Voters," (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2005): 1–5.
- 7 Jennifer E. Manning, "Membership of the 112th Congress: A Profile," 15 August 2012, Rep. R41647, Congressional Research Service (hereinafter referred to as CRS), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Ennis et al., "The Hispanic Population: 2010": 2. As indicated in the previous footnote, these averages include *all* Hispanic individuals in the U.S., including the undocumented, permanent residents, and electorally inactive.
- 8 Ennis et al., "The Hispanic Population: 2010": 2.
- 9 States that gained seats were Arizona (1), Florida (2), Georgia (1), Nevada (1), South Carolina (1), Texas (4), Utah (1), and Washington (1). States that lost seats were Illinois (1), Iowa (1), Louisiana (1), Massachusetts (1), Michigan (1), Missouri (1), New York (2), Ohio (2), and Pennsylvania (1). Kristin D. Burnett, "Congressional Apportionment," <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-08.pdf> (accessed 23 August 2012): 3.



A 2011 photograph of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus members on the steps of the U.S. Capitol shows their growing numbers. When the caucus was founded in late 1976 seven Hispanics served in Congress. By the start of the 112th Congress in January 2011, 29 served in the House and two in the Senate.

Image courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

- 10 Ennis et al., "The Hispanic Population: 2010": 6. The Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP) has recently reported that registration growth rates have fallen in states with large Hispanic populations such as Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas. See "Hispanic Voter Registration Could Hit 20-Year Low," *HispanicBusiness.com*, http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/2012/7/13/hispanic_voter_registration_could_hit_20year.htm (accessed 23 July 2012).
- 11 Similar trends have been observed with regard to women and African Americans in Congress. See, for example, Office of History and Preservation, U.S. House of Representatives, "Assembling, Amplifying, and Ascending," in *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2007): 542–563; Office of History and Preservation, U.S. House of Representatives, "Permanent Interests," in *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2008): 368–415.
- 12 For more information about the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, see Paul R. Wieck, "Different Interests, Personalities Hurt Unity of Hispanic Caucus," in F. Chris Garcia, ed., *Latinos and the Political System* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988): 300–305; Maurilio E. Vigil, "The Congressional Hispanic Caucus: Illusions and Realities of Power," *Journal of Hispanic Policy* 4 (1989–1990): 19–30; Maurilio Vigil, *Hispanics in Congress: A Historical and Political Survey* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996): 88–97; John A. Garcia, "Congressional Hispanic Caucus," in Suzanne Oboler and Deena J. González, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 396–398.
- 13 See, for example, Allan Bogue et al., "Members of the House of Representatives and the Processes of Modernization, 1789–1960," *Journal of American History* 63 (September 1976): 275–302.
- 14 For instance, 87 percent of the Latino Members of Congress in this period hold bachelor's degrees; another 8 percent attended college. More than a quarter also hold advanced degrees (doctorate, 28 percent; and masters, 26 percent).
- 15 R. Eric Peterson, "Representatives and Senators: Trends in Member Characteristics since 1945," 17 February 2012, Rept. R42365, CRS: 8–11.
- 16 Congressional statistics are from CRS Membership Profiles of the 100th–112th Congresses (1987–2012).
- 17 Petersen, "Representatives and Senators: Trends in Member Characteristics since 1945": 4.
- 18 More than 300 pairs of siblings have served in Congress. Since 1990, eight pairs have served in the House or in the House and the Senate, six of them simultaneously. See *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.
- 19 See, for example, Roxanne Roberts, "House Mates: Loretta and Linda Sanchez Are Congress's First Sister Act," 12 December 2002, *Washington Post*: C1.
- 20 Valerie Richardson, "Colorado Brothers Set Sights on Hill," 30 August 2004, *Washington Times*: A2; Judith Kohler, "Brothers Elected to Congress Head to D.C.," 26 December 2004, Associated Press; Mark Leibovich, "Cramming Two Houses into One Apartment: Rep. John and Sen. Ken Salazar Hold Joint Session in Kitchen," 5 January 2005, *Washington Post*: C1; Eddie Pells, "Colorado Kennedys' Going to Washington Together," 3 November 2004, Associated Press.
- 21 Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006*; Office of History and Preservation, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007*.
- 22 For a useful essay on surrogate representation within a larger discussion about "descriptive" versus "substantive" representation, see Michele L. Swers and Stella M. Rouse, "Descriptive Representation: Understanding the Impact of Identity on Substantive Representation of Group Interests," in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Congress*, Eric Schickler and Frances E. Lee, eds., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 241–271.
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- Staff Directory* (Mt. Vernon, VA: Staff Directories Ltd., 1994): 968; Jeffrey L. Farrow, “‘Benefits’ in Puerto Rico,” 8 November 2006, *New York Times*: A22.
- 24 Abraham Holtzman, “Empire and Representation: The U.S. Congress,” *Legislative Quarterly Studies* 11 (1986): 249–273, especially p. 269.
 - 25 Philip Shenon, “In the House, But without Votes,” 12 April 1985, *New York Times*: A14.
 - 26 Robert Friedman, “P.R. Commissioner Speaks His Piece on the House Floor,” 6 January 1993, *San Juan Star*: 3; Friedman, “CBR Gets Diluted Right to Vote,” 6 January 1993, *San Juan Star*: 3; Friedman, “Romero Co-Sponsors Bill to Permit Family Leave,” 7 January 1993, *San Juan Star*: 4; Betsy Palmer, “Delegates to the U.S. Congress: History and Current Status,” 29 April 2009, Rep. R40555, CRS: 10.
 - 27 Palmer, “Delegates to the U.S. Congress: History and Current Status”: 10; Peterson, “Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico”: 5–6.
 - 28 *Congressional Record*, House, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (10 February 1997): H401.
 - 29 *Congressional Record*, House, 107th Cong., 1st sess. (15 May 2001): 8074; Scott Radway, “Delegate Wants ‘People to Come Back Home,’” 10 August 2001, *Pacific Daily News*: 3A.
 - 30 For more information on the number of Hispanic Members by Congress, see Appendix A: Hispanic-American Representatives, Senators, Delegates, and Resident Commissioners by Congress, 1822–2012.
 - 31 Barbara Sinclair, *Legislators, Leaders, and Lawmaking: The U.S. House of Representatives in the Postreform Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 82.
 - 32 See Robin Kolodny, *Pursuing Majorities: Congressional Committees in American Politics* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).
 - 33 *Politics in America, 1982* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1983): 119; *Almanac of American Politics, 1990* (Washington, D.C.: National Journal, Inc., 1991): 118.
 - 34 David W. Rohde, *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 86.
 - 35 Bill Richardson with Michael Ruby, *Between Worlds: The Making of an American Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 2007): 106, 110–118.
 - 36 *Almanac of American Politics, 2010* (Washington, D.C.: National Journal, Inc., 2011): 221; Jennifer Yachnin, “Becerra Takes Rare Tack in Caucus Race,” 25 September 2006, *Roll Call*: 1; Carl Hulse, “Pelosi Names Maryland Congressman to Lead Democratic Campaign Efforts,” 20 December 2006, *New York Times*: A27; “Official Biography of Xavier Becerra,” http://becerra.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=16 (accessed 29 May 2012).
 - 37 Emily Pierce, “A Super Day; Menendez Rises, Shines,” 28 August 2008, *Roll Call*: 36; David M. Herszenhorn, “Schumer Out, Menendez In,” 25 November 2008, *New York Times*: 20.
 - 38 Anita Kumar, “Martinez Steps Up to Top GOP Role,” 20 January 2007, *St. Petersburg Times*: 5A; Lesley Clark, “Some in GOP Oppose Martinez,” 17 January 2007, *Miami Herald*: A3.
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 - 40 See Appendix C: Hispanic-American Members’ Committee Assignments (Standing, Joint, Select) in the U.S. House and Senate, 1822–2012.
 - 41 Christopher J. Deering and Steven S. Smith, *Committees in Congress*, 3d ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1997): 63–72.
 - 42 See Appendix C. Several individuals served on more than one prestige committee.
 - 43 Bree Hocking, “Bonilla: A ‘Quiet Giant,’” 29 November 2004, *Roll Call*: n.p.; Lizette Alvarez, “Honoring ‘95 Vow, House Republicans Replace 13 Chiefs,” 5 January 2001, *New York Times*: A1; Ben Pershing and John Bresnahan, “GOP Fills Panel Seats,” 8 January 2001, *Roll Call*: n.p.; Gary Martin, “Texan Tops Agriculture Panel; Bonilla to Head Subcommittee,” 6 January 2001, *San Antonio Express-News*: 15A. Edward Roybal of California was also a “cardinal,” chairing the Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Committee from 1981 to 1993. As he was first elected in 1963, he is not included in this discussion.
 - 44 See Appendix E: Hispanic-American Chairs of Subcommittees of Standing and Select Committees in the U.S. House and Senate, 1949–2012.

- 45 Deering and Smith, *Committees in Congress*: 80.
- 46 See Appendix C.
- 47 See Appendix C.
- 48 See, for example, Susan Webb Hammond, *Congressional Caucuses in National Policy Making* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998): 96–98.
- 49 Hammond, *Congressional Caucuses in National Policy Making*: 74–79, 190; *Politics in America, 2010* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2011): 190. Participation in congressional service organizations offered another opportunity for Hispanic Members to gain leadership experience. Guam's Robert Underwood was chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (1999–2001), and Dennis Cardoza of California was co-chairman of the Blue Dog Coalition (2005–2007).
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- 52 Christine Marie Sierra, "In Search of National Power: Chicanos Working the System on Immigration Reform, 1976–1986," in David Montejano, ed., *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999): 140. See also "Statement of Bill Richardson, Re: Latin America-2/6/85," Press Releases, 1982–1994, Box 1, RG 233, NARA; "Congressman Richardson Urges Measures to Strengthen Democracy in Latin America," Legislative Update 1985–Folder 3 of 3, Caucus Monthly Publications 1985–1994, Box 1, RG 233, NARA.
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- 55 Wieck, "Different Interests, Personalities Hurt Unity of Hispanic Caucus": 303; Vigil, *Hispanics in Congress*: 92–93. Vigil does not list any specific pieces of legislation about which Blaz disagreed with the caucus.
- 56 David Rampe, "Power Panel in Making: The Hispanic Caucus," 30 September 1988, *New York Times*: B5; Vigil, *Hispanics in Congress*: 87.
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- 59 Ricardo Chavira, "Hispanic Caucus Comes of Age," *Hispanic Business*, May 1992.
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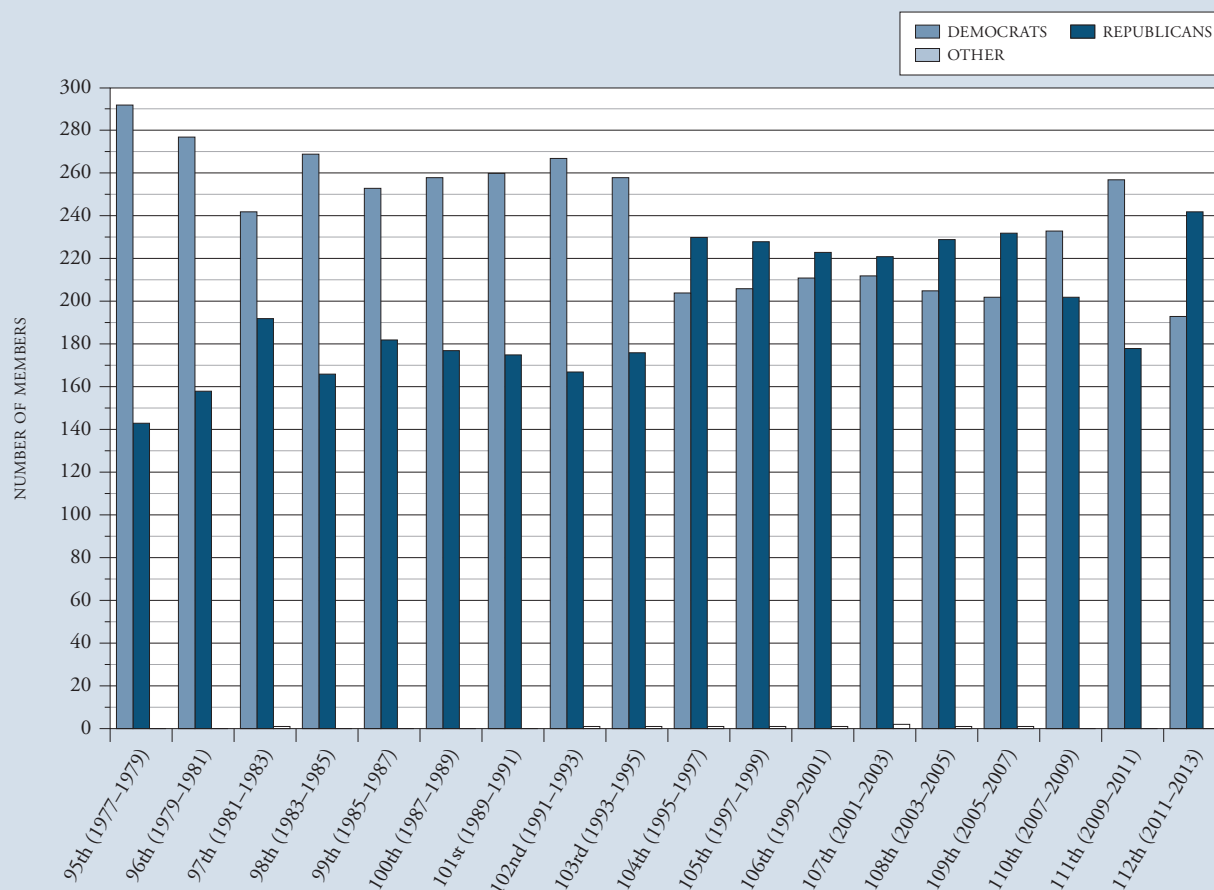
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- 120 Elizabeth Aguilera, "Salazar Hopeful on Immigration, Saying 'Failure ... Is not an Option,'" 10 June 2007, *Denver Post*: C6. See also Milagros (Mimi) Aledo, Rafael J. López, Liz Montoya, interview with Senator Ken Salazar (D-Colorado), *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy* 17 (2004–2005): 5–10.
- 121 Aguilera, "Salazar Hopeful on Immigration, Saying 'Failure ... Is not an Option'"; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 109th Cong., 2nd sess. (29 September 2006): S10606. Salazar spoke frequently on the Senate Floor about immigration reform. See, for example: *Congressional Record*, Senate, 109th Cong., 2nd sess. (16 May 2006): S4577–S4579; *Congressional Record*, Senate, 109th Cong., 2nd sess. (20 September 2006): S9757–S9759.
- 122 *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1993 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1994): 171–179.
- 123 Bill Richardson, "Free Trade with Mexico, Sí!," 22 March 1991, *Washington Post*: A25. See also Richardson, "Mexico—the Answer to Bush's Domestic Troubles," 12 December 1991, *Wall Street Journal*: A14; *Congressional Record*, House, 103rd Cong., 1st sess. (18 October 1993): 24868; *Congressional Record*, House, 103rd Cong., 1st sess. (1 November 1993): 26922–26923.
- 124 For a detailed explanation of efforts to influence undecided Members, see Frederick W. Mayer, *Interpreting NAFTA: The Science and Art of Political Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 273–319; *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1993: 171–179.
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- 127 Lynne Olson, "Territories Still Have Quiet Voices in Congress," 14 May 1978, *Baltimore Sun*: A3.
- 128 For background on Vieques and the protests surrounding its use by the U.S. Navy, see Katherine McCaffery, *Military Power and Popular Protest: The U.S. Navy in Vieques, Puerto Rico* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002); and César Ayala and José Bólvár, *Battleship Vieques: Puerto Rico from World War II to the Korean War* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2011).
- 129 *Congress and the Nation 1997–2001*, vol. 10 (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2002): 290; *Congressional Record*, House, 106th Cong., 1st sess. (13 April 1999): 6270.
- 130 The House Armed Services Committee attempted to change the Clinton agreement with a provision in the 2001 defense authorization act, H.R. 4205 (H. Rep. 106-616), that would allow the navy to resume training "without interference" until 2003. Many Members, especially those of Puerto Rican descent, opposed the resumption of military training on Vieques. See *Congress and the Nation 1997–2001*: 291; *Congressional Record*, House, 106th Cong., 2nd sess. (18 May 2000): 8523; *Congressional Record*, House, 106th Cong., 2nd sess. (18 May 2000): 8520.
- 131 Gwen Ifill, "Guam, against the Tide, Wants Air Base Closed," 20 April 1991, *New York Times*: 6; Bernard E. Trainor, "Lack of Vote Doesn't Deter Delegate from Guam," 23 February 1988, *New York Times*: B6; Ron Scherer, "Aviation Ghost Town: Guam Lobbies for US Base to Close," 20 August 1991, *Christian Science Monitor*: 6.
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- 133 César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007): 268–269. For an in-depth look at section 936 and Puerto Rican politics, see Sara Lynn Grusky, "Political Power in Puerto Rico: Bankers, Pharmaceuticals, and the State," (Ph.D. diss., Howard University, 1994).
- 134 James L. Dietz, *Economic History of Puerto Rico: Institutional Change and Capitalist Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986): 300–301.
- 135 For a discussion of 936 corporations and their connection to the PPD, see Maria Bird Pico, "Romero Leads Colorado in Campaign Fundraising," 22 October 1992, *San Juan Star*: 17.

- 136 Harry Turner, "Antonio Colorado Sworn In as Resident Commissioner," 5 March 1992, *San Juan Star*: 2. See also Harry Turner, "Section 936 Critics Fail to Awaken Opposition," 7 March 1992, *San Juan Star*: 3.
- 137 Carlos Romero-Barceló, "Puerto Rico, U.S.A.: The Case for Statehood," *Foreign Affairs* 59 (Fall 1980): 62–63.
- 138 Joanne Omang, "Puerto Rico in Political Turmoil," 20 August 1978, *Washington Post*: C1.
- 139 Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*: 277.
- 140 Interview with Carlos Romero-Barceló, Governor of Puerto Rico, "Should Puerto Rico Be a State?," 11 April 1977, *U.S. News & World Report*: 47.
- 141 First quotation from the *Congressional Record*, House, 104th Cong., 2nd sess. (21 May 1996): 11989. See also Dan Burton and Peter Deutsch, "It's Time to Reform the Puerto Rico Tax Credit," 16 January 1996, *Christian Science Monitor*: 18. Second quotation from, Doreen A. Hemlock, "Puerto Rico Loses Its Edge," 21 September 1996, *New York Times*: 31; see also, Larry Luxner, "Puerto Rico's Star Losing Its Luster," 8 December 1997, *Journal of Commerce*: C7.
- 142 In November 1993, an island-wide plebiscite revealed a razor-thin margin: 48 percent for commonwealth, 46 percent for statehood, and 4 percent for independence. The 1998 plebiscite ended with a similar result. Fernando Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y partidos políticos de Puerto Rico, 1809–2000* (Mayagüez: Editorial Isla, 2003): 354–355.
- 143 Guy Gugliotta, "Puerto Rico's State of Uncertainty," 16 September 1997, *Washington Post*: A15.
- 144 *Congressional Record*, Extension of Remarks, 100th Cong., 1st sess. (14 May 1987): 12552. See, for example, H. J. Res. 218 (100th Congress) introduced by Representative Ron Dellums of California calling for independence; S. 1182 (100th Congress) introduced by Senator Bob Dole of Kansas calling for statehood; and H.R. 3536 (101st Congress), introduced by Representative Robert Lagomarsino of California, calling for a referendum on status.
- 145 Jennifer Yachnin, "Guam Delegate Hopes to Exchange Long Flights for Governorship," 26 September 2002, *Roll Call*: n.p.
- 146 *Congress and the Nation 1993–1996*, vol. 9 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1998): 881.
- 147 *Congress and the Nation 1993–1996*: 881–882.
- 148 When Democrats regained control of the chamber for the 110th and 111th Congresses (2007–2011), the rule was again changed to allow the vote in the Committee of the Whole House. When Republicans regained control of the chamber in the 112th Congress (2011–2013), it was again repealed.
- 149 *Congress and the Nation 1993–1996*: 888; Eamon Javers, "Samoan Delegate: I Fought in Vietnam But I Can't Vote in the U.S. Congress," 18 January 1995, *The Hill*: n.p.
- 150 Ennis et al., "The Hispanic Population: 2010": 2.
- 151 Kathryn Jean Lopez, "Power Struggle: Hispanic Republicans in Congress Have Banded Together to Challenge the Powerful Congressional Hispanic Caucus," 31 August 2003, *Hispanic*: 21.
- 152 Alan K. Ota, "Diversidad," 27 November 2010, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*: n.p. See also Alan K. Ota, "Amid Gains, Hill Hispanics Look to Get Along," 29 November 2010, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly*, <http://cq.com/doc/weeklyreport-3768531> (accessed 23 August 2012).

Party Divisions in the House of Representatives

95th–112th Congresses (1977–2012)*

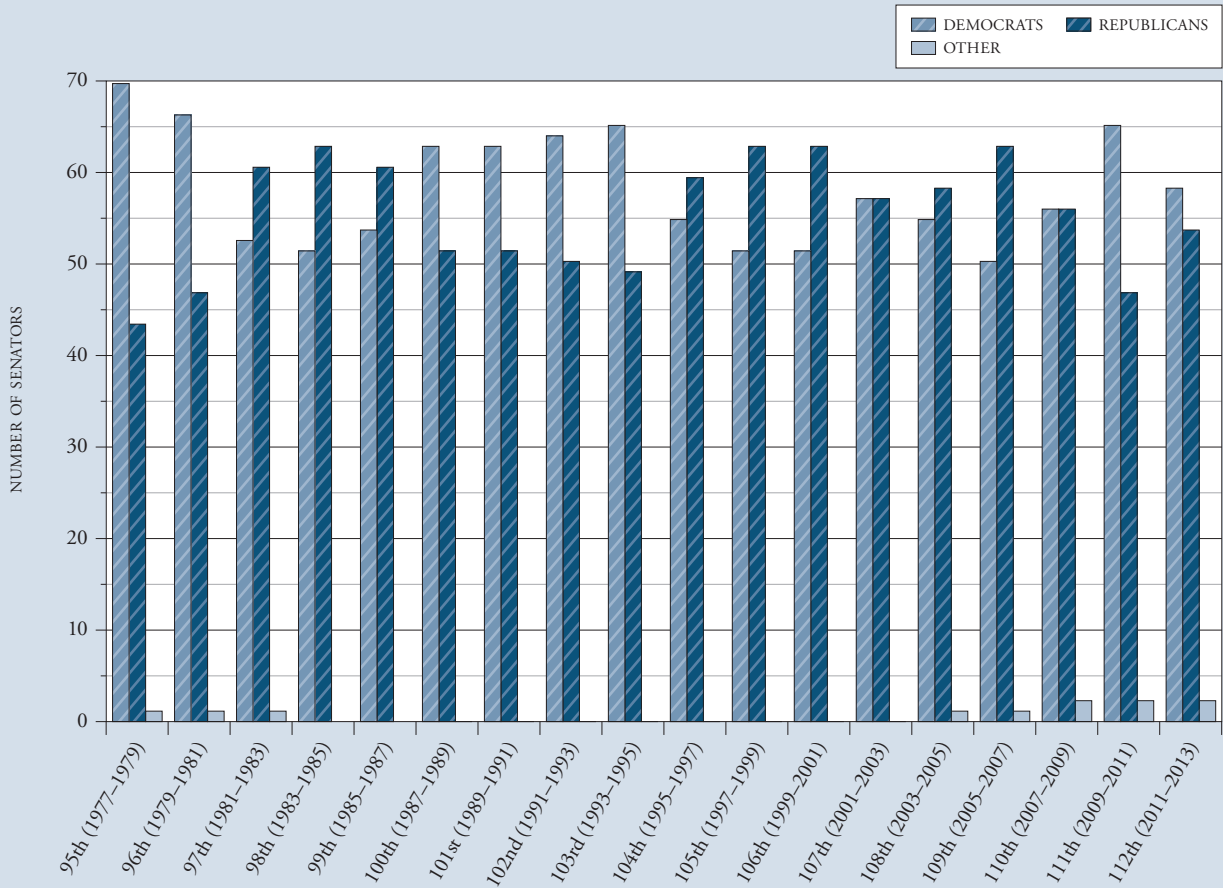


Source: *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–2005* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005); also available at <http://bioguide.congress.gov>; Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

*Party division totals are based on election day results.

Party Divisions in the Senate

95th–112th Congresses (1977–2012)*

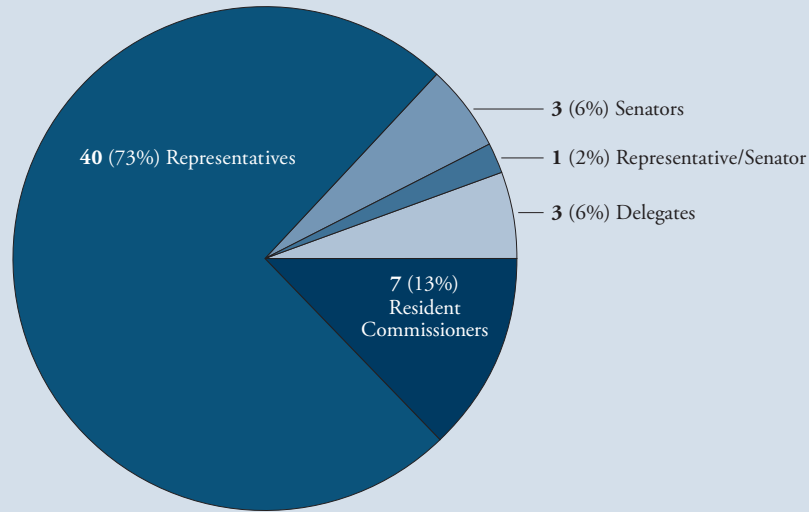


Source: *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–2005* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005); also available at <http://bioguide.congress.gov>; U.S. Senate Historical Office.

*Party division totals are based on election day results.

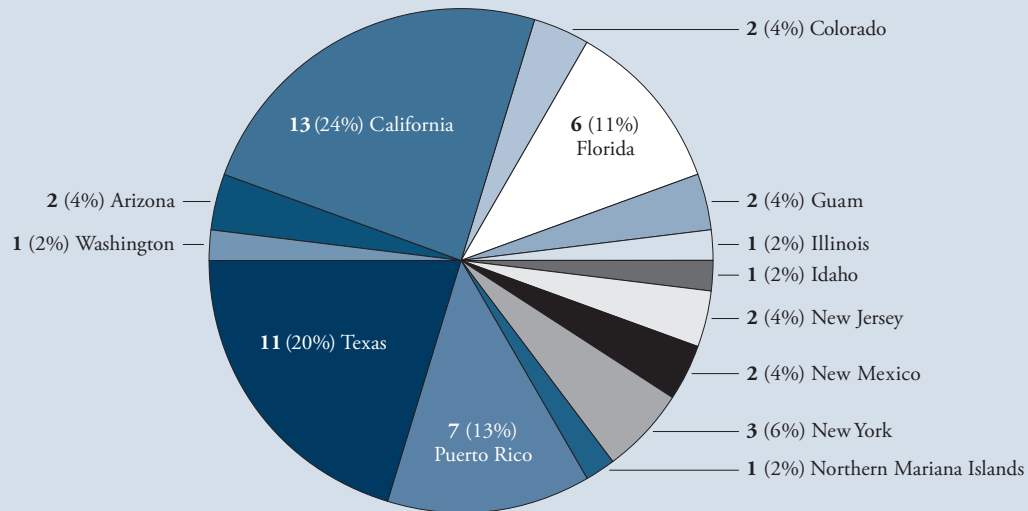
Hispanic-American Members by Office

1977–2012*



Hispanic-American Members by State and Territory

First Elected 1976–2012*

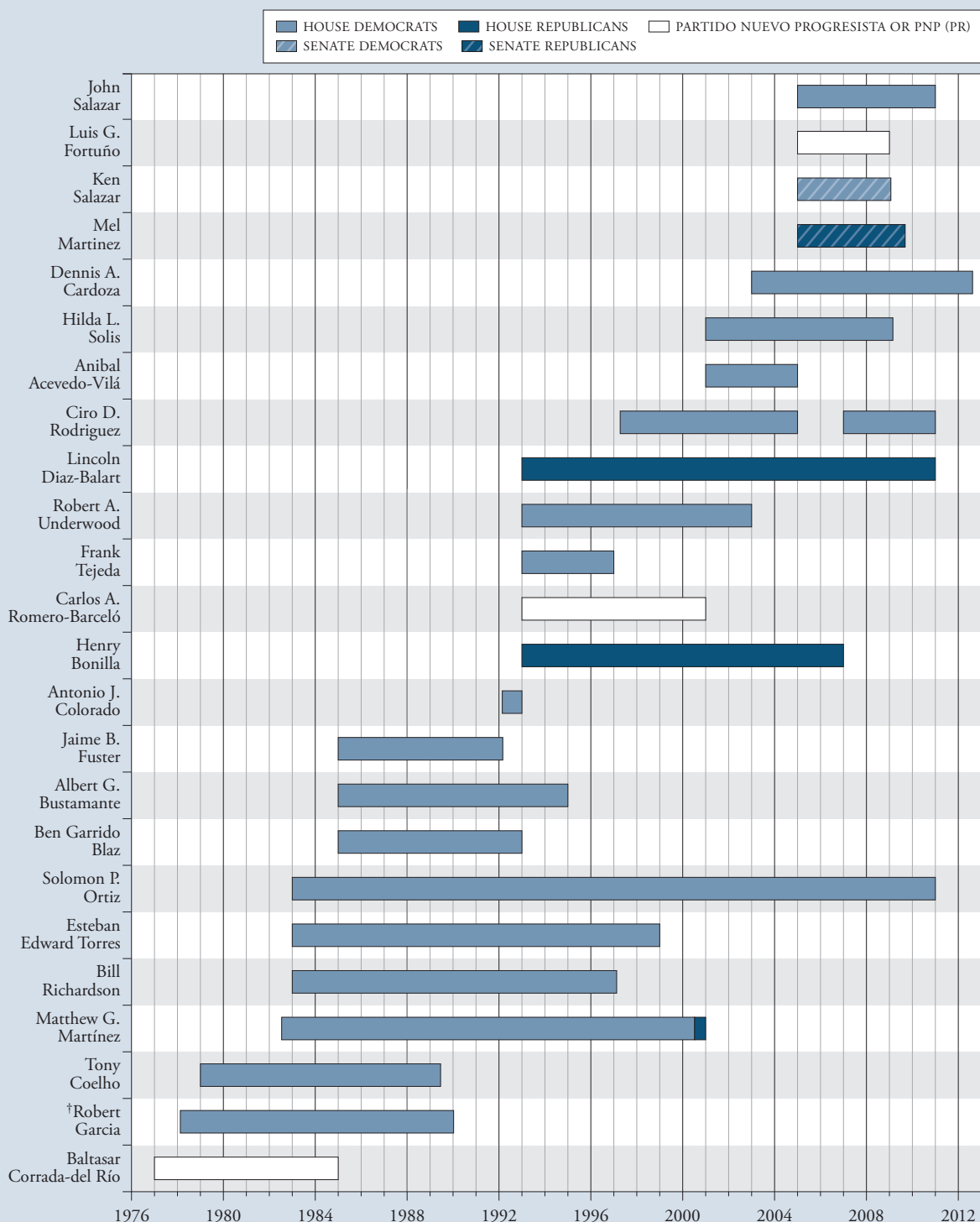


Source: Appendix A: Hispanic-American Representatives, Senators, Delegates, and Resident Commissioners by Congress, 1822–2012; Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives; U.S. Senate Historical Office.

*112th Congress (2011–2013) as of September 1, 2012.

Congressional Service

For Hispanic Americans in Congress First Elected 1976–September 1, 2012*



† Robert García was a Republican-Liberal when elected to Congress in a special election on February 14, 1978. Seven days later, on February 21, he switched party affiliations to become a Democrat.

*Does not include Members whose service extends past September 1, 2012.